

By Dave Hoffman

Dear Business Owner,

Choosing an internet marketing expert isn't easy. Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims, and simply bad information from super low prices and high pressure sales to unqualified technicians and near worthless methods. How do you ever find a qualified competent internet marketing professional? You start by reading this consumer guide. In this fact filled booklet, you'll discover:

- How To Avoid 3 Internet Marketing Rip Offs
- 7 Comparisons That Will Make Internet Marketing Easy To Understand
- 5 Common Website Mistakes
- What Is SEO And Why Is It Important
- 4 Costly Misconceptions About Internet Marketing
- Why You Want To Market Your Business On The Internet
- Guarantees

We wrote this guide to help you better understand internet marketing. Now, with this information, you can make an informed, intelligent decision. And if you have any questions about internet marketing, you're invited to call us at, 314-324-9904. We've dedicated our business to educating consumers. We'll be happy to help in every way.

Cordially,
Dave Hoffman
Internet Marketing Specialist
Website Marketing St. Louis

Chapter One

7 Comparisons That Will Make Internet Marketing Easy To Understand

The first thing we need to do is define internet marketing. Just like traditional (or offline) marketing there are many ways to market on the internet. To start let's compare the offline methods that you are familiar with to their online counterparts.

Traditional Advertising

1. **Classified Ads** – Newspapers, magazines, other printed publications
2. **Display Ads** – ¼, ½, full page ads in newspapers, magazines, could also be a billboard
3. **Mailings** – Letters, postcard, brochures
4. **Radio** - Commercials, talk shows
5. **Television** - Commercials
6. **Face to Face** – Trade shows, presentations, telemarketing, any time you're personally interacting with a potential customer
7. **Yellow Pages**

Classified ads



The internet has its own version of classified ads, which can be found on most newspaper sites and entire sites focused on them like Craigslist or Backpage. They are specifically designed with the user in mind and are fairly straight forward and easy to use. While many people have the impression these sites are just to get rid of things they no longer want, I know a business owner who landed one of his best clients from Craigslist.

Tip: *The key to classified ad sites is consistency. New ads show up at the top and get the most views, so you need to place ads as often as the site allows for the best results.*

Display ads



The internet equivalent to taking out a display ad in a newspaper or magazine is placing an ad on other people's websites. This can be done in a couple of ways. One is by working out a deal directly with the owner of the website. Another way is to advertise with Google or one of the other search engines. When you do this the search engine will match your ad with relevant sites in their network and display the ad. This is one form of "Pay Per Click" (PPC) advertising which gets its name, because you pay a certain amount when someone clicks on your ad. (Note: What I just described is considered content based PPC.)

Tip: *The Key to advertising with the search engines is account setup, testing and optimizing.*

Mailing



I'm sure there's no surprise here. (as you may have guessed) Email is the online equivalent to sending your customers postcards, letters, or brochures. And it can be very powerful, because it is the only way outside of some social media where you can proactively contact your potential or existing customers. The other methods of marketing rely on them coming to you. One mistake I see consistently is most business owners don't have a method of collecting email addresses, either on their website or in person. I see businesses spend thousands of dollars to bring customers in the door and then let them leave without attempting to collect contact information.

Tip: *The key here is to offer an incentive for your customers to give you their email address and then sending them valuable information in an interesting way so they continue to open your emails.*

Radio



Podcasts are the internet equivalent to advertising on the radio. Unlike the radio though just having a pod cast that contains a commercial isn't going to get many listeners. For podcasts to be effective they need to contain some valuable information, be entertaining, or both.

Tip: *Like stated above, entertaining and informative are the keys here.*

Television



Online video is the equivalent to traditional TV advertising. The great part of video on the internet is it can be very inexpensive to do and there are many different ways to take advantage of it. You can shoot a video of yourself or your business, interview customers, or even have your own online "TV" show if you want. Even having a video professionally made and distributed is inexpensive compared to a traditional television commercial. Of course everything can be taken to the extreme but often the best videos are simple (but good quality) down to earth videos that are entertaining or informative.

Tip: *Keys here are good quality (doesn't mean expensive), entertaining, informative, or both.*

Face to Face



There are many different situations when you interact with your customers face to face. Traditionally this could be trade shows, presentations, when they come into your business, or call you on the phone. The internet equivalent to this is Social Media. Most people have heard about this one way or another. Two of the big players are Facebook and Twitter, but there are many others. Social Media allows you for the first time ever to have "real time" back and forth communication with your customers on a large scale. You can present offers to them, ask them questions, answer their questions and they can do the same.

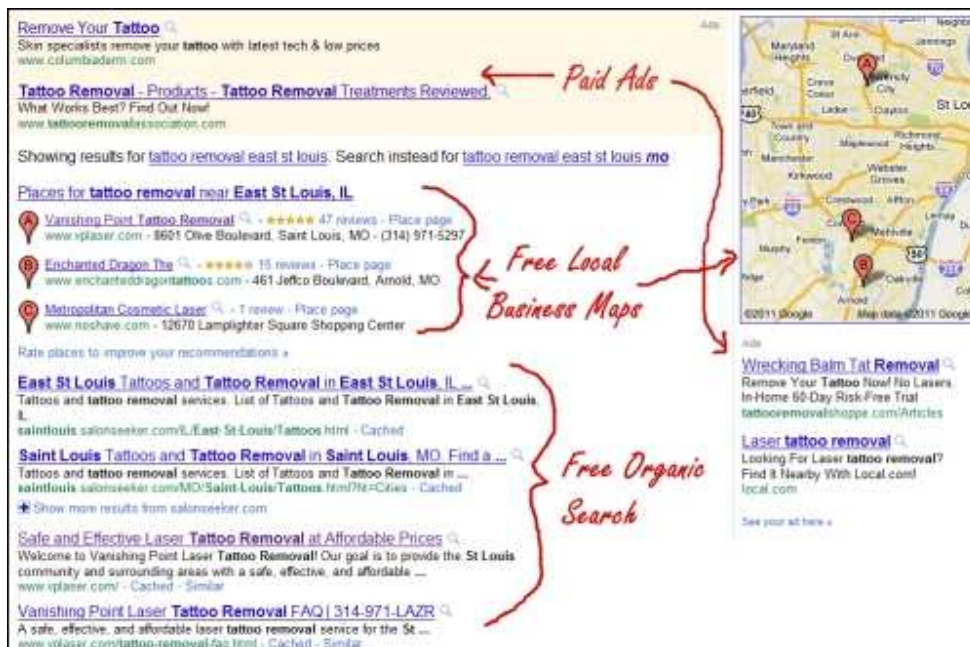
Tip: *The key here is consistently communicating with your audience and building relationships.*

Yellow Pages



For years people used the Yellow Pages to find solutions to their problems by looking for businesses by categories, products, or services. This has largely been replaced by the internet search engines, the largest being Google who controls over 65-70% of the search traffic. Research shows that 8 out of 10 people first search online before making a purchase with a local business. Taking advantage of this form of advertising means having your site show up on the first page of the search results (only 11% of searchers ever go to the second page). There are three ways a business can show up in the search results and they are:

1. Paid Search or Search Based Pay Per Click
2. Local Map Listings
3. Organic Search Listings



Search Based Pay Per Click Advertising

We talked about content based PPC above. This form of PPC is search based and shows up at the top and right side of the search results. One advantage of PPC advertising over traditional advertising is you only pay when a potential customer takes action and clicks on your add. You don't pay anything just to have it show up.

Tip: The Key to advertising with the search engines is account setup, testing and optimizing.

Google, Yahoo, and Bing Business Maps

These are very important for a local business because they often show up above the other listings in the search results. Over time these have become more and more intertwined with the other search engine listings and any good internet marketing company will include make showing up on the first page of the map results part of their marketing package.

Tip: *The Key to Business maps is an optimized listings, citations, and reviews. (Citations are when Google finds you business listed on other sites like local business directory sites.)*

Organic Search Listings

The closer your site is to the top the better. Studies show that the first listing gets 40% of the traffic. That drops to 12% for the second position and a little over 8% for the third. The way you get your site to the top of the search results is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO for short). Basically SEO is using techniques to tell the search engines what your site is about in a consistent manner. Another thing to keep in mind, that most people overlook (including many SEO experts), is most of the other forms of online advertising can show up in the search results. While most SEO companies just focus on your website, you can get videos, podcasts, social network properties, press releases, business directory listings, and even some classified ad listings all to rank in the search results.

Tip: *The Key to SEO is having optimized content on your website and getting links to your website from other sites.*

Overall Tip: *The key with the search engines is being on the first page and as close to the top as possible. The top three spots get the most traffic, and it takes constant promotion to get and stay there. (Having multiple listings on the first page is a very powerful strategy for traffic and credibility.)*

Bonuses:

Local Business Directories

These are sites like MerchantCircle, Yelp, and CitySearch. These are basically small, specific search engines for local businesses, and there are hundreds of them. There is value being listed in them, but be cautious of someone who inflates the importance of them. Remember Google and Bing control over 90% of the search engine traffic. The real value they offer is the credibility they pass to Google and Bing and getting your listing within these local directories to show up in the search results.

Articles and Press Releases

Another form of advertising on the internet is submitting articles and press releases to the many article and press release directories out there. These have the advantage of creating links back to your site (which help your rankings) and the big hope is one of them will be picked up by a large site or they will show up in the search results.

Summary

Most ways of advertising online will fall into one of the methods listed above or will be a combination of them. This is just an overview of the different methods. There are entire books, training courses and specialized software that have been created around each of the topics above. I will elaborate a little more on some these later in this guide.

Chapter Two

3 Internet Marketing Rip-Offs To Avoid

Here are three common “rip offs” to watch out for when hiring an internet marketing specialist.

Expert Is Really Not An Expert

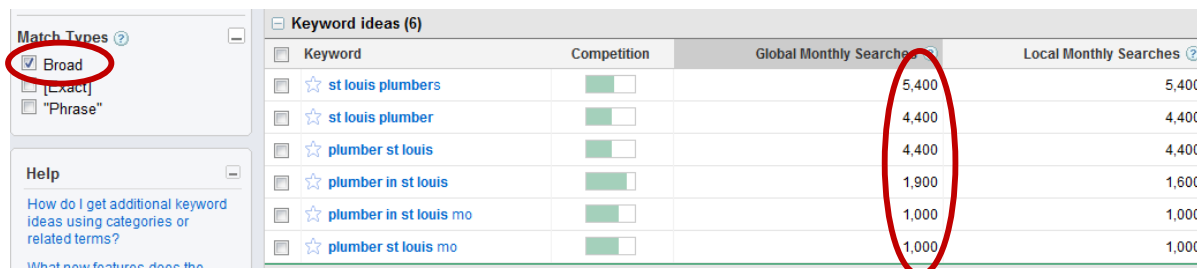
Currently there is a big opportunity for local businesses to claim their place on the internet. The ones that do can establish a good foothold in their market making it hard for others to penetrate. Because of this there are many people who would like to provide this service to businesses. Unfortunately some of these people don't know as much as they imply they do, but know enough to sound good to uninformed owners. Only after a few months of not seeing results does the owner realize he's been taken. This wastes the business owner's time and money, and also gives the internet marketing industry a bad name.

Tips: *The best way to avoid this is by having knowledge, which is the purpose of this guide. Also make sure the person you hire is going to keep you updated on their progress. You should be getting some type of reports at least every 2 weeks for a few months and then monthly after that. Also look for professionals that offer a guarantee. If they are truly experts they should have an idea how long it will take for you to see some results, and be willing to stand behind it.*

Exaggerated Claims

There are many numbers that can be thrown around when it comes to marketing on the internet, and often there are websites to substantiate them. The problem comes from what the numbers actually mean. The one that is exaggerated the most is search volume numbers. These numbers can come from the king of search itself, Google. So how can they be exaggerated? What many people don't tell you is there are different types of searches, and each type has different search volumes associated with it. Take a look at the different search volumes below taken from Google's keyword tool.

Broad Match



Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
st louis plumbers	Green bar	5,400	5,400
st louis plumber	Green bar	4,400	4,400
plumber st louis	Green bar	4,400	4,400
plumber in st louis	Green bar	1,900	1,600
plumber in st louis mo	Green bar	1,000	1,000
plumber st louis mo	Green bar	1,000	1,000

Phrase Match

Match Types	Keyword ideas (6)			
	Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad	"plumber st louis"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	320	320
<input type="checkbox"/> [Exact]	"st louis plumbers"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	260	260
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Phrase"	"st louis plumber"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	260	260
	"plumber in st louis"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	58	58
	"plumber st louis mo"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	58	58
	"plumber in st louis mo"	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	16	16

Exact Match

Match Types	Keyword ideas (6)			
	Keyword	Competition	Global Monthly Searches	Local Monthly Searches
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad	[st louis plumbers]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	210	210
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Exact]	[st louis plumber]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	210	210
<input type="checkbox"/> "Phrase"	[plumber st louis]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	210	170
	[plumber st louis mo]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	46	46
	[plumber in st louis]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	22	22
	[plumber in st louis mo]	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>	< 10	< 10

As you can see there is a big difference. The question is which number truly represents people searching for your product or service? To help answer that question let's look at the definition of each type of search. Here is how Google's defines each match type with some notes I added for clarification. (Examples are for the search term "st louis plumber")

Broad match: The sum of the search volumes for the keyword idea, related grammatical forms, synonyms and related words.

Note: The search volumes include search phrases that don't contain the entire phrase, and can be in any order. Possible examples: "plumber education in st louis", "st louis association of plumbers", and "plumber supplies in st louis".

Phrase match: The sum of the search volumes for all terms that include that whole phrase.

Note: The search volumes only include search phrases that contain the entire phrase, but can have words preceding it or following it. Possible examples: "best st louis plumber", "st louis plumber reviews".

Exact match: The search volume for that keyword idea

Note: The search volumes only include the exact phrase. In this case "st louis plumber"

As you can see Exact match is a good place to start because we know at least that many people are using that specific term. And in very competitive markets that would be the number to go with. However in most local markets, businesses can rank for many variations of the keywords they are targeting. This means looking at Exact match is on the low side. Taking into account the many variations a good number is probably between Phrase and Broad match for most businesses, but nowhere near the inflated number of just Broad match.

Tips: *Again knowledge is the key. When someone presents search volume numbers ask what match type they are and note their response. If they try to present only Broad match volumes to you or give you a blank stare, run.*

You Need A New Website

A website is a website right? Not exactly. I'll be the first to admit that not all websites are created equal. There are many ways of creating websites and incidentally not all of them were created with search engine rankings in mind. An example of this is a website built entirely in Flash. Since search engines such as Google can't read the content on these sites they are harder to rank than a non Flash based site. The important word in that last sentence though is "harder", I didn't say impossible. Almost any site can get ranked in most local markets, so be wary of someone who says you need a new website solely for ranking purposes. There are other reasons you may end up wanting to go with a new site, but it should be for more than just getting it ranked.

Tips: *This one is a little tricky, because there are legitimate reasons for abandoning an old site and creating a new one. However, most sites I've come across only need some tweaks to be effective, and I've been able to get small sites built entirely in Flash to rank on the top of the first page.*

Chapter Three

What Is SEO And Why Is It Important

I've touched on SEO in the first chapter, but because it is such an important part of most internet marketing campaigns, I'm going to go into more detail here. Today search engines, such as Google, have replaced the Yellow Pages for many people. This has become a huge opportunity for businesses that understand this shift and want to take advantage of it. Here are some incredible statistics regarding search engines that you may not know:

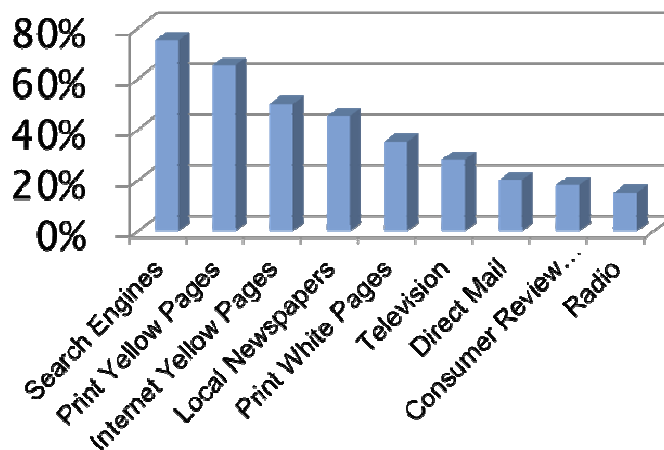
75% of Americans use search engines on a regular basis.

56% of Americans use search engines every day.

40% of all search engine searches are for local businesses and services.

92% of all local searches carried out will eventually convert to a sale.

Search Engines are now THE #1 Media Type Consumers Use To Find Local Businesses.



What is SEO?

Search engine optimization (SEO) allows you to take advantage of this trend by using a collection of techniques to increase the search engine ranking of your website. Search engine ranking is the position that your site occupies when a search is done using keywords you are targeting.

Note: "Keywords" is a term used in internet marketing for the words or phrases people type into the search engines to find what they are looking for.

Why Is Search Engine Ranking Important?

Studies show that only about 11% of searchers go past the 1st page of the search results, and this is only if they don't find what they are looking for on page one. Since Google lists 10 results per page, this means if you're not in the top ten you are missing out on a lot of traffic. Even on the first page the top three listing get the majority of the traffic. Below is a study that shows the click through rates of the top ten positions.

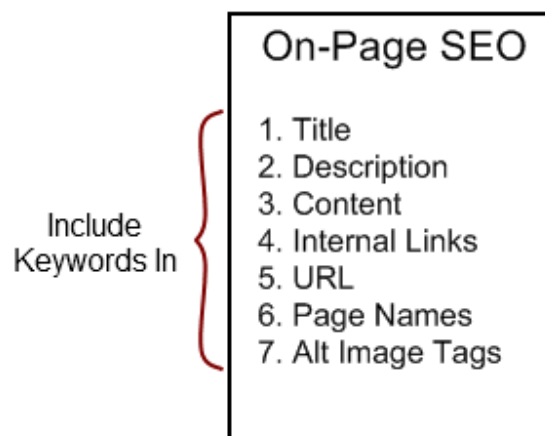
Google SERP Click Through Rates		
Rank #	Click Throughs	Percent %
	19,434,540	100%
1	8,220,278	42.30%
2	2,316,738	11.92%
3	1,640,751	8.44%
4	1,171,642	6.03%
5	943,667	4.86%
6	774,718	3.99%
7	655,914	3.37%
8	579,196	2.98%
9	549,196	2.83%
10	577,325	2.97%

The Two Categories Of SEO

SEO techniques fall under two broad categories, on-page factors and off-page factors.

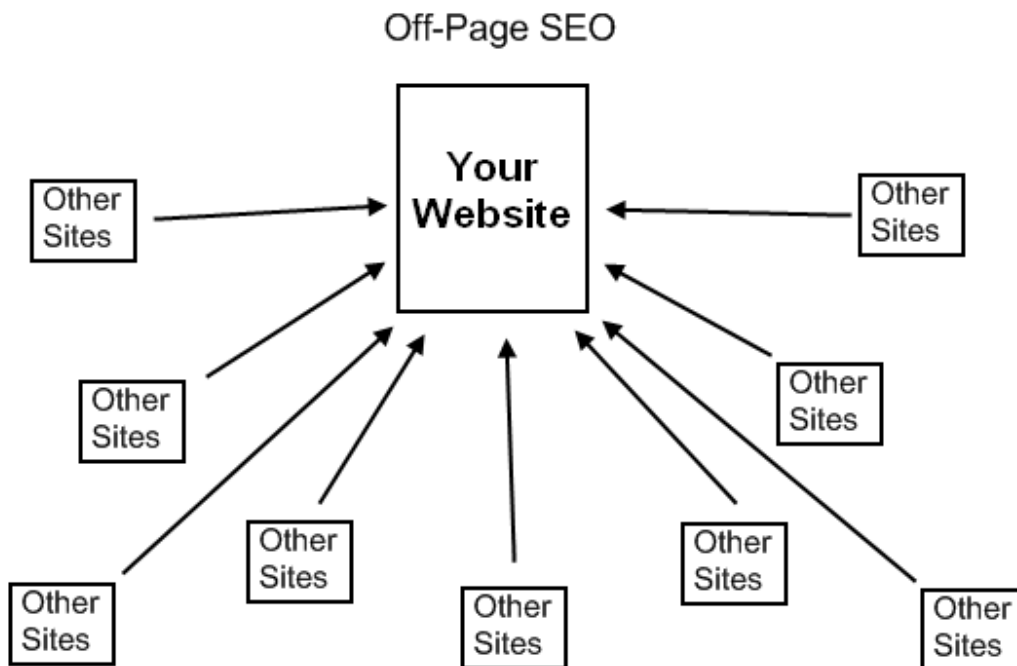
On-Page SEO

On-page factors are all the things you can do on your website to increase SEO. The on-page factors usually revolve around keywords and you use these techniques to let the search engines know what your site is about. On-page factors include things like using your keywords in the title and description meta tags, the use of the alt tag for images, HTML header tags, keyword placement in the content, etc.



Off-Page SEO

Off-page factors revolve around backlinks, but also involve the use of keywords. Backlinks are the links placed on other sites that point to your site. Backlinks are also known as "inbound links", a term which is often easier to understand. Inbound links are those links pointing towards your site. Google and other search engines look at these links as votes and all other things being equal the site with the most votes wins!



Chapter Four

4 Common Website Mistakes

The Site Is Built In Flash

Flash based websites can look stunning and really slick. If they are designed and created well, they can leave your visitors with a "wow" factor. If they are not designed well, they can be a big mess. However the real problem isn't with design, it is due to the fact that search engines cannot read the content within Flash. This makes it harder to get ranked, because they use the content of your site to determine what your site is about. Another issue is Flash based websites have to load. The first page a visitor sees is called the splash page. You may have seen these, they say "Loading..." on the page, and sometimes contain a percentage count that goes up while it loads. In today's world where everyone seems to want things "now", you can lose potential visitors who don't have the patience to wait for your site to load.

***Tips:** If you are having a site built make sure it won't be built in Flash. It is OK to have elements of your site in Flash if you must, but keep the text of your site outside of it. If you already have a site built in Flash all is not lost. It may take more time to get the site ranked but it is possible in most local markets. One way to overcome some of the limitations of a Flash based site is to create a blog in a subdirectory of your main site.*

Contact Information Is Not On Every Page

The purpose of a website is so people can see what product and services you offer and then contact you. To do that they have to be able to find your contact information and having it prominently displayed on each page makes it easier for them. Even if you have a "Contact Us" page you should still at least display your phone number on each page.

***Tips:** Along with your contact information using a call to action like "Call Today!" has been proven to increase response.*

No Incentive For Contact Information

Most people go to a website, look around then leave. Even if they are interested in your product or service there are many reasons they may not come back. The solution is to offer some incentive to them for giving you their name and email address. This can be a free report, or guide to help them with some issue that relates to your business. Once you have their contact information you can start building a relationship with them and win their business.

***Tip:** Many business owners have a large amount of knowledge in their head that would interest their customers. Think about some of the common questions people ask, interesting behind the scene information, or tips that would help them use your product or service.*

Not Enough Content

When I talk about content I am referring to text, and the search engines love it. It is a big part of what they use to determine what a website is about and where it should rank for certain search phrases. All things being equal, more content means more traffic. You should try to have one or two paragraphs on each page. Some ideas for more text are: an “about us” section, history, or FAQ page.

Tip: *One powerful idea for more content is creating a blog on the back end of your site. (www.yourdomain.com/blog) A blog has the following advantages:*

- *Increases the size of your site (which Google likes).*
- *Increases the chances of ranking for off the wall searches that some of your potential customers are using.*
- *Can be used to showcase reviews and articles about your business.*
- *Gives visitors a reason to come back to your site.*
- *Can be used to keep your customers informed on what is new in your business.*

Chapter Five

4 Costly Misconceptions About Internet Marketing

Build It And They Will Come

Most business owners realize they have to be on the internet, so they put up a website and expect people to find it. This makes sense when you look at the advertising that most owners are familiar with. When placing an ad in a newspaper, you place the ad, people see it, and respond. Until recently, not many people talked about SEO or promoting a website.

Your website is your online storefront, and to get people to visit it you need to promote it just like your physical store. This can be done through any or all of the methods we talked about in chapter one. One of the most powerful methods is SEO since search engines are so widely used and it can encompass most of the other types of online advertising.

People Search For My Business By Name

I've talked to some business owners who are convinced they don't need to promote their site. This is because when they search for their business name their website is at the top of the search results. They also believe that is the way most people search for them. This is may be true for people already familiar with them or their business, but not for potential new customers. New customers don't know who they are. These individuals are going to search for the product or services that can solve their problems, just like they did when using the Yellow Pages.

My Customers Don't Search Online

There are business owners who believe customers of their industry don't search online to find them. With over 1 billion local searches every month I would say most of them are wrong, but instead of guessing it is easy to find out in about 5 minutes. Using Google's free keyword research tool, we can easily find out how many people are searching for a specific product or service.

Tips: *You can find out how many people are searching for your product or service by following the instructions below.*

1. Go to Google's free keyword tool
 - a. <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>,
 - b. Or type in "Keyword Tool" in Google, and click on the first result.
2. Type in a few terms you think your customers are searching for in the "**Word or phrase**" box, and click on "**Search**"
3. Go through the list of keyword ideas that Google returns and pick the ones most relevant to your products or services. (You can type them in notebook or select the boxes besides the keyword and download them.)

4. *Once you have a list of keywords, make a new list of these keywords with “st louis” before the keywords and a second list with “st louis” after the keyword.*
5. *Put these two lists back into Google’s Keyword Tool, and click on “**Search**”*
6. *This will give you the local search volume for you market.*

Internet Marketing Is An Instant Solution

Some business owners start an internet marketing campaign and end up stopping after a month or two because they aren’t seeing a return on their investment. It is important to realize that most internet marketing campaigns take time. It takes time to build an email list, optimize a site and get it ranked, or build a social network following. Even Pay Per Click advertizing that can start sending traffic as soon as it is setup, takes time to optimize and tweak.

***Tips:** Make sure the internet marketing professional you are working with gives you a time frame for your project and is willing to back it up with a guarantee. He should also provide reports on a regular basis so you can see the progress being made. Once you know what to expect you can make the decision if it is something you can commit to or not.*

Congratulations!

You now know more about internet marketing than at least 95% of local business owners. My hope is this report saved you many hours of frustration and research time, and will help you make an informed, intelligent decision in regards to your internet marketing needs.

I know as a business owner you are busy and I appreciate the fact you made the commitment to download and read this report to help grow your business. Because of that I would like to offer you something special. Now before your “He’s going to try to sell me something!” alarm goes off. Know that this is totally FREE, no strings attached. Just like this report.

I’d like to offer you a FREE 23 point website analysis and a report on your online market. I know some companies that charge \$149 for this, but I want to give it to you FREE. This will take the information you just learned to the next level so you can see how it applies specifically to your business.

You will learn...

- How well your website is optimized for traffic and conversions. Some simple changes can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of your website to attract customers and make them pick up the phone and call.
- **How easy (or hard) is it for customers to find your website. The “easy to find” websites get the most traffic and ultimately more customers.**
- What your competition is doing online. Knowing what your competition is up to is the first step to making sure you stay ahead of them.
- **How many people are searching for your products and services right now. Find out the income potential of marketing online before you spend any money.**
- What search terms are they using and which ones are the best. Laser guide you efforts for more impact and less cost.
- **And more...**

After reviewing the analysis and report you will know if marketing on the internet is something that will benefit you, and the next steps to take to make it a reality.

For your FREE analysis and report go to:

<http://www.websitemarketingstlouis.com/free-analysis>

or

Call: 314-324-9904